

Open Channels

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The Value of Review, Resources and Regionalization



Conference Planning and Support Teams (from left to right): Roger Perk, Rock Island District; Shawn Phillips, Memphis District; Deanne Strauser, St. Louis District; Gary Young, Vicksburg District; Camie Knollenberg, Rock Island District; Ellen Milliron, Rock Island District; Amber Kraciun, Rock Island District; Carol Jacks, Rock Island District; Diane Karnish, Rock Island District; and Rayford Wilbanks, Mississippi Valley Division. Not shown: Elliott Stefanik, St. Paul District; Michelle Rachel, New Orleans District; Terri Lewis, New Orleans District; and Susan Smith, Mississippi Valley Division.

Photo by Susan Smith

By Susan Smith
Mississippi Valley Division

The Mississippi Valley Division Planning Community of Practice held the MVD Planning Conference in Moline, Ill., April 13-16, with approximately eighty people in attendance. The theme of the conference was "The Value of Review, Resources and Regionalization."

MVD planning conferences are offered biennially to share information, gain insights from people outside of USACE, build relationships across USACE and with others, share lessons learned and information on new techniques, provide a vision of the future direction of planning, and build an understanding of the region's total planning program.

Speakers represented both internal and external customers/stakeholders. As a result of these conferences, the state of planning in MVD is enhanced and planners are better prepared to meet contemporary planning challenges in a collaborative environment.

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The Path Forward Principles include:

1. *Focus on the Mississippi River*
2. *Use integrated resource research, planning and management*
3. *Ensure long-term holistic perspectives*
4. *Resolve major issues*
5. *Engage and implement adaptive management*
6. *Emphasize risk communication*

Inside this issue:

My Two Bits <i>BG Michael J. Walsh</i>	3
Living the Values <i>SFC Robert Cook III</i>	4
L&D 3 Heroes	5
Hometown Heroes <i>MVD Deployees</i>	7
Interagency Levee Task Force	8
Employee News	10



The Year of the NCO—SFC Robert L. Cook III, Living the Values

In recognition of the exceptional people who work within the Mississippi Valley Division, this Open Channels feature will highlight how our colleagues are living the Army Values.

We're hoping to get some fascinating interpretations that are genuinely bringing the values to life by the people living them.

If you have someone you'd like to honor, submissions are welcome. It is our intention to celebrate the dedicated characters that make up our organization by recognizing their contributions exemplifying the core values of the Army.



SFC Robert L. Cook III, Senior Construction Supervisor, 579th Engineer Detachment, Forward Engineering Support Team-Main (FEST-M), Vicksburg, Mississippi

Since 1775, the Army has set apart its NCOs from other enlisted Soldiers by distinctive insignia of grade.

With more than 200 years of service, the U.S. Army's Noncommissioned Officer Corps has distinguished itself as the world's most accomplished group of military professionals. Historical and daily accounts of life as an NCO are exemplified by acts of courage, and a dedication and willingness to do whatever it takes to complete the mission. NCOs have been cele-

brated for decorated service in military events ranging from Valley Forge to Gettysburg, to charges on Omaha Beach and battles along the Ho Chi Minh Trail, to current conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq.

In recognition of their commitment to service and willingness to make great sacrifices on behalf of our Nation, Secretary of the Army established 2009 as Year of the NCO.

Throughout 2009, the Army honors NCOs

through initiatives and events that:

- Enhance awareness and public understanding of the roles and responsibilities of today's NCO.
- Enhance and accelerate the development of NCOs through education, fitness and leadership development initiatives.

We invite you to join the celebration of one of our own, SFC Robert L. Cook, III who was recently recognized.

Where do you work?

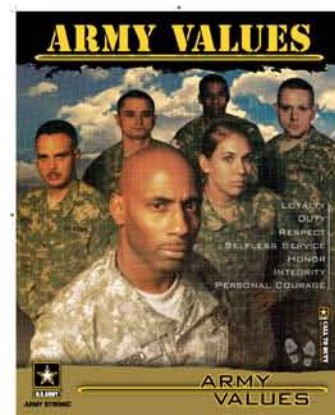
I work for the 579th Engineer Detachment, Forward Engineering Support Team-Main, Vicksburg, Miss. (FEST-M).

How long have you been in the Army and with the Corps?

I have 19 years of service, and have been with the Corps for one year.

What is your job?

I'm a senior construction supervisor for the Forward Engineering Support Team-Main. My job as a member of the FEST-M is



to train civilian team members in preparation for deployment on basic skills needed to function in a combat environment. In addition, as senior construction supervisor, I provide assessments on projects, missions or humanitarian efforts.

How do you see your job making a difference and contributing to the Corps' success?

The difference that I see through the use of the FEST-M is that it allows the Corps increased capability and expertise to support worldwide operations to any country, at any time and any place.

What do you like best about your job?

The military-civilian team focus.